

30th Annual USOE MLK Contest

10th Grade Level Essay Winner

Jacob Cline – Woods Cross High School

Essay title “Be the One Who Stands Strong”

Big or small people are people. No matter what color your skin is or how educated you may be all people are equal. Unfortunately not everyone is always treated equally. We see discrimination all around us no matter where we go. Standing up for the right will not always be easy. Many close friends will leave your side when adversity comes knocking at your door step looking for a fight. One of the greatest men in the 20th century realized this but kept true to what he believed. This man was able to alter history for standing up for what he believed in. It was never easy for him and he was persecuted day and night.

Martin Luther King Jr. went through more than most of us can imagine. He said, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” When we stand up for what we believe in we are going to face adversity no matter who we are. Someone will not agree with what we believe to be true. When Martin Luther King Jr. started speaking up for what he knew to be true he was persecuted and soon began to realize that he stood alone. His friends who he believed would be behind him stopped in their tracks with a frozen tongue and uttered nothing. Martin Luther King Jr. faced ridicule and hatred towards him and his race daily. He states that what he remembered was not the ridicule or the hatred but the silence of his friends who did not stand behind him when he needed it most. Many of his friends turned their backs and did not say a word. This must have pierced his heart more than any hatred could ever inflict. Unfortunately the hatred got so far that Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered, shortly after this Civil Rights movement began.

Those friends who held their tongues must have regretted that decision for the rest of their lives. We can learn an immensely important lesson from this simple yet deep quote. We all have been in a situation of dire need where we needed help but no one came to our rescue.

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We may also have been in the position where help was needed but we were too ashamed to be the person we needed to be. May we all be the person we imagine coming to our rescue. Let us be the friend who comes to the rescue of the needy. The friend who is not afraid to say what needs to be said or to do what needs to be done. Those are the people who will be remembered as heros for generations to come. It takes great courage to do this but if we stand behind the person in need we will be able to die with a clear conscious and a peaceful heart. Let us be the friend who came to the rescue when help was needed.